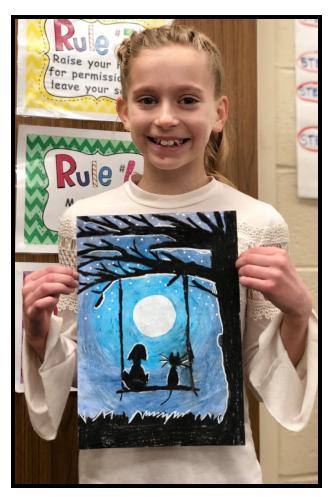**For immediate release February 4, 2019**

Madison, IN: E.O. Muncie 4th grader Carolyn Mahoney wins Artsy Switch Box Contest.

In a joint project with the Madison Area Arts Alliance, Madison Consolidated School put out a Call 4 Art to all students in Kindergarten through Grade 12.

The Artsy Switch Box Project will transform plain electrical switch boxes into public pieces of art across Madison's hilltop, Hanover, and downtown. The "slip covered" boxes are locally fabricated with area artist's work, turning the grey background urban utilities into conversational pieces which celebrate the historical and cultural wealth of our community. Kim Nyberg, Executive Director - Madison Area Arts Alliance, knew this would be a unique opportunity to showcase student work. "The switch box located on the campus of the Madison Consolidated High School (just across from the McDonald's entrance) provides the perfect canvas to showcase student creativity. Our board reached out to the district and within a few days we had a plan to invite all Madison students to get involved," shares Nyberg.

Just before leaving for Christmas break students received the guidelines and were encouraged to get creative using the medium of their choice. By January 18, the contest deadline, MCS had received 59 entries to the contest. Artwork ranged from hand drawn images in crayon, to original oil paintings on canvas, to pencil sketches, to digital photography, and graphic art creations using computer software. "We received an incredibly diverse and beautiful collection of original work from students all over our district from Kindergarten through high school," states Ashley Schutte - District Communications Coordinator. "The pieces were submitted via email with a digital photo of the original artwork. As I began opening the images to prepare them for the judges I was overwhelmed by the creativity, originality, and thought each student put into the work they submitted."

E.O. Muncie 4th grader Carolyn Mahoney, daughter of Norman and Kimberly Mahoney, received a paint sent for Christmas. She went right to work creating a unique and eye-catching watercolor titled *Friends Swinging in Moonlight*. Carolyn was surprised on Monday morning with the announcement in her classroom. "She thinks she has lost the original piece," shares her mom Kimberly. "Her dad has her convinced our dog knocked it off of the refrigerator over the weekend, stomped on it, and he just threw it away knowing it had been ruined!" Mr. Horvath continued the ruse on Monday morning adding to Carolyn's anxiety that if the original could not be found, we would "have to select another piece". Carolyn didn't realize her mom had already brought the original to school in anticipation of the special announcement.

A panel of community members judged the anonymous entries. Each piece was assigned a number and all entries were made available during office hours over several days for judges to view and vote for their top ten. At the conclusion of the voting period, the finalist were compiled, ranked, and the piece with the most votes won. Carolyn's artwork will be photographed in high resolution and shared with the Madison Area Arts Alliance who will then work to transform the 8 x 11 watercolor painting into a vinyl slip cover for the switch box. "Provided the weather cooperates and it stays a little warmer we hope to have the installation completed by early to mid spring," shares Nyberg.

"We are working with Madison Area Arts Alliance to determine ways to share the many pieces of unique artwork we received from the other students", shares Schutte. "There are just too many incredible pieces not to share. We want to find a way to publicly display the others throughout our district. We are working on some grant opportunities which would help to fund a special project we have in mind. We hope to have more news on this later this spring."

Please visit this link on our website to see all entries submitted.

Thank you to all of the Madison students who participated in this very special project!